

Clearwater Region

This large region was home to more wolf groups than any other in 2005 including 19 documented resident, 4 documented border, 3 suspected resident, and 1 suspected border wolf packs (Figure 7; Table 3). Eleven of the 12 documented packs that reproduced qualified as breeding pairs; the Chesimia pack was excluded as a breeding pair based on lethal control of the alpha female, which left only 1 breeding age wolf in the pack by the end of 2005. All 4 border packs between Idaho and Montana within the Clearwater Region were counted as Montana packs for recovery purposes, but probably spent time in Idaho, as well.

Of the 4 documented wolf mortalities of known cause, all were related to human causes; 4 members of the Chesimia pack were lethally controlled. The death of the alpha female of the Cold Springs pack is under investigation. Confirmed and probable wolf-caused cattle losses were attributed to the Chesimia (6 cattle) and Florence (2 cattle) packs. The Chesimia pack also was responsible for the loss of 6 hunting hounds in 2005. Twelve wolves were captured in this region, which resulted in the placement of 6 radio collars; 6 other wolves were either euthanized or too small to radio collar at the times of their captures. In addition, biologists captured and radio collared 2 wolves from Montana's Fish Creek pack.

Documented Resident Packs

Bimerick Meadow

Information from USFS personnel led to confirmation of this newly documented pack. Reports of wolf activity in this area resulted in a capture operation where an adult male, B247 (possibly the alpha), was radio collared. Subsequent investigations indicated that at least 2 pups were present based on howling. Estimated pack size at the end of 2005 was 4 wolves based on field observations. Limited telemetry locations indicated this pack used the Fish Creek drainage and surrounding area. The Bimerick Meadow pack was counted as a breeding pair for 2005.

Chesimia

At the beginning of 2005, 2 radio-collared wolves were being monitored. A minimum of 3 pups was documented in June; 1 gray pup was observed and 2 others were heard howling. As in 2004, these wolves were implicated in depredations on domestic livestock leading to wolf control actions conducted by WS. Yearling male B221 was captured and euthanized in late August and a female pup-of-the-year was removed in September. In mid-October, further control actions removed the suspected alpha female and a subadult male. This pack used a relatively small home range between Elk Creek and Dworshak Reservoir south of Elk River, Idaho, though locations in February and December 2005 were north of Aldermand Ridge. Pack size at the end of 2005 was estimated at 5 wolves, following the lethal removal of 4 individuals. Because of the lethal removal of the supposed alpha female, the Chesimia pack was not counted as a breeding pair for 2005.

Cold Springs

This pack was estimated to include 6 wolves at the end of 2004, although an aerial observation during winter 2004/2005 accounted for only 3 wolves. Suspected alpha female, the sole radio-collared wolf, B206 did not localize during the spring denning period. Repeated investigations of known rendezvous sites failed to provide evidence of reproduction. Biologists had a difficult time monitoring B206 from the ground, partially due to a large wildfire near the edge of the Seven Devil's Wilderness, which restricted access to B206's home range. B206's radio signal

was detected on mortality during a monitoring flight in October; her remains were located the following day and USFWS Law Enforcement is investigating her death. Estimated pack size at the end of 2005 was 3 wolves based on reports obtained during the hunting season. This pack was not counted as a breeding pair for 2005.

Coolwater Ridge

Female B163 founded this pack in 2004. She and her unknown mate produced their second litter in 2005, a minimum of 4 black pups, on their namesake ridge between the Selway and Lochsa Rivers. An observation during the hunting season indicated that this pack contained 11 wolves, 10 black and 1 gray. The Coolwater Ridge pack was counted as a breeding pair for 2005.

Eagle Mountain

Alpha male B136 and his uncollared mate produced their third litter of pups in 2005. A minimum of 4 pups was observed in mid-September in the Boulder Creek drainage, tributary to the Lochsa River. Pack size for 2005 was estimated at a minimum of 6 individuals. This pack was a 2005 breeding pair.

Earthquake Basin

Biologists were able to document this new pack following field investigations based on a report of wolf activity received from USFS personnel. At least 1 adult wolf was heard howling and 6 pups, 3 blacks and 3 grays, were observed. A capture attempt was conducted within days of initial detection of this pack, but importation of domestic livestock into the immediate area of the rendezvous site may have led to abandonment by the wolves. Further efforts to locate and capture this newly documented pack were unsuccessful. Based on field observations, this pack was estimated to contain a minimum of 8 wolves. The Earthquake Basin pack remained uncollared and was counted as a breeding pair for 2005.

Eldorado

Biologists captured and radio collared their first wolf, female B258, from this pack in 2005. Limited telemetry data indicated that this pack used the upper Eldorado Creek drainage east to the Mex Mountain area. A minimum of 2 pups was detected based on howling. Field observations indicated a minimum of 5 wolves in this pack. The Eldorado pack was counted as a breeding pair for 2005.

Florence

Two of the 3 male wolves captured in 2004 remained with the pack. B202 apparently dispersed, or his radio collar failed, as he was not located after March 2005. An aerial observation of this pack during winter 2004/2005 included 15 individuals. The den site area was investigated in early June, at which time 6-9 pups were documented. This pack was implicated in a depredation in September triggering a control action, but no wolves were captured or removed. The Florence pack counted as a breeding pair for 2005.

Gospel Hump

Contact with both radio-collared wolves, 2-year-old females B138 and B139, was lost during 2004, making monitoring of this pack difficult. Although biologists investigated previously used rendezvous sites, no evidence of reproduction or wolf presence was detected. The status of this pack was unknown. The Gospel Hump pack was not counted as a breeding pair for 2005.

Hemlock Ridge

This pack produced its third documented litter in 2005. Because of dense vegetation at the rendezvous site, no pups were seen, but a minimum of 2 was detected based on howling. In addition, at least 4 adults were accounted for based on radio-collared animals, howling, and visual observations, that resulted in a minimum pack size estimate of 6 wolves for 2005. The Hemlock Ridge pack was counted as a breeding pair for 2005.

Indian Creek

Five wolves were observed in the Indian Creek drainage of the Selway River during a winter ungulate survey conducted by IDFG in 2004. Based on this observation, this pack was verified as a documented pack for 2004. Although a report of multiple wolves, including pups, heard howling in this area was received during late September 2005, biologists did not verify reproduction or obtain an estimate of pack size. This pack was not counted as a breeding pair for 2005.

Kelly Creek

Two wolves, females B237 and B238, were captured and radio collared in mid-July. Suspected alpha male B220 led biologists to the general area of this pack's traditional rendezvous site where 2 gray pups were observed and a third was suspected based on howling. Estimated pack size at the end of 2005 was 11 wolves. The long-standing Kelly Creek pack was counted as a breeding pair for 2005.

Lochsa

Reports supplied by the USFS directed biologists to conduct a capture operation in the Lost Creek drainage off the Lochsa River. Female wolf B232 was radio collared in mid-June. She was eventually observed with 3 pups and 2 other adults in the Castle Butte area. Though there has been scant telemetry data thus far, it was likely that this newly documented pack represented the Postoffice Creek area of suspected wolf activity from earlier years. Because B232 was a subadult, indicating prior reproduction for this pack, this group was retroactively added as a documented pack for 2004. Pack size was estimated at 6 individuals in 2005 based on field observations. The Lochsa pack was counted as a breeding pair for 2005.

Magruder

Suspected alpha male B110 has not been located since June 2004 (probably due to expiration of his radio collar) and female B219 not since late May 2005. Efforts to investigate this pack's previously used rendezvous sites were hampered by wildfires, but sparse wolf sign was found, indicating continued wolf presence in the area. The Magruder pack was not counted as a breeding pair for 2005 and there was no estimate of pack size.

O'Hara Point

Suspected alpha male B111 has not been located since October 2004 and it was likely his radio collar expired. Male B162, captured as a pup in 2003, dispersed by mid-May 2005 leaving no radio-collared wolves in this pack. A capture operation was conducted in early June, but no adults were caught. At that time, a rendezvous site was located where 6 black pups were recorded. A minimum of 8 wolves was estimated for this pack in 2005. The O'Hara Point pack was counted as a breeding pair for 2005.

Pettibone Creek

Six wolves were observed in the Pettibone Creek drainage of the Selway River during a winter ungulate survey conducted by IDFG in 2004. Based on this observation, this group was verified as a documented pack for 2004. Evidence of wolves has also been reported near Elk Summit, approximately 10 miles (16 km) north of the headwaters of Pettibone Creek. No estimate of pack size was made and no evidence of reproduction was obtained. The Pettibone Creek pack was not counted as a breeding pair for 2005.

Pot Mountain

This newly documented pack in 2005 was verified when 5 wolves were observed on the flank of Pot Mountain during a winter ungulate survey conducted by IDFG in spring 2005. Field efforts were unsuccessful in locating these wolves and very limited wolf sign was detected in the area. No estimate of pack size was made and no evidence of reproduction was obtained for this year. The Pot Mountain pack was not counted as a breeding pair for 2005.

Red River

By the end of 2004, radio contact was lost with all 3 radio-collared wolves in this pack; B165 was illegally killed, B166's radio collar was suspected to have failed, and B164's radio signal could not be detected. In mid-June 2005, while investigating rendezvous sites previously used by this pack, an off-frequency radio signal was detected that turned out to be that of B166. She was accompanied by a minimum of 2 pups, as determined from howling, in the general vicinity of Porters Mountain south of Elk City, Idaho. An effort was initiated to capture additional members of the pack and/or replace B166's radio collar, but the pack moved away within 2 days of their detection and could not be located again. Wolf B166's radio signal has not been detected since then. Pack size was estimated at 5 wolves for 2005. The Red River pack was counted as a breeding pair for 2005.

Selway

With the death of B5 in late 2004, the last radio-collared wolf in the Selway pack was gone. Monitoring efforts in 2005 included inspection of previously used rendezvous sites, which did not reveal evidence of reproduction. Fresh tracks and scats of at least 1 wolf were located near the traditional den site and an abbreviated capture effort was undertaken, although wildfires in the vicinity caused early termination before any wolves were caught. A report of 6 black wolves in the Meadow Creek drainage in September 2005 provided evidence of continued wolf presence in this pack's territory. Another report was received from an outfitter in the upper Running Creek drainage of 17 black and 1 white wolves. Pack size was estimated at 6-18 wolves in 2005. The Selway pack was not counted as a breeding pair for 2005.

Documented Border Packs

Big Hole (MT)

Because the Big Hole pack denned in Montana, and the majority of their locations were there as well, this pack was officially counted as a Montana pack for 2005. Fieldwork was conducted in coordination with MTFWP. The pack produced a minimum of 2 pups in 2005 based on estimates from howling. Alpha male B7 and alpha female B11, founders of this pack and members of the initial translocation in 1995, were observed, though their social status within the pack was unknown for 2005. Each of these wolves is now at least 10 years old, and likely nearer 12 years. Minimum estimated pack size at the end of 2005 was 9 wolves based on field

observations. Female wolf B151 was the sole remaining radio-collared wolf in this pack. This pack was counted as a breeding pair for Montana in 2005.

Fish Creek (MT)

While conducting capture operations nearby, biologists, in coordination with MTFWP, surveyed the Fish Creek drainage in Montana, part of the Central Idaho Experimental Population Area. Six black and 3 gray pups were observed, and howling indicated that at least 3 adults were present as well. Alpha female B235 and adult male B236 were captured and radio collared. Pack size was estimated to be 12 wolves, based on field observations near the rendezvous site. Aerial monitoring indicated that these wolves used portions of the Kelly Creek drainage in Idaho that was part of the Kelly Creek pack's territory as late as 2000, and by the Lupine, and possibly Fish Creek, packs after that. During a December 2005 monitoring flight, MTFWP personnel located B235 and B236 near Deception Saddle, near the southern end of the Five Lakes Butte pack territory. The Deception Saddle area was investigated during early fall 2005, and limited wolf sign, possibly from the Fish Creek pack, was found. This border pack used areas in Idaho and Montana, but based on the location of the den site, was counted as a breeding pair for Montana in 2005.

Lake Como (MT)

A minimum of 3 wolves was present in this area, as documented by MTFWP, but none were radio collared. No evidence of reproduction was obtained in 2005. Reproduction was last verified for this pack in 2002. Very little was known about wolf activity in this area from 2002 through 2005. For recovery purposes, the Lake Como border pack is counted as a documented pack for Montana. This pack was not counted as a breeding pair for 2005.

Sula (MT)

The Sula pack, in which 2 wolves were radio collared in spring 2005, used the west side of Highway 93 in the Lost Trail Pass area, southwest of Sula. This pack contained 5 adults and 5 pups at the end of 2005. One of the radio-collared wolves died of natural causes over the summer, leaving 1 radio-collared member for monitoring. The Sula border pack was counted as a breeding pair for Montana in 2005.

Suspected Resident Packs

B147

Female B147, who dispersed from the Jureano Mountain pack in 2003, continued residing east of White Bird, Idaho. Despite many attempts to document pack and reproductive status, B147's affiliation with other wolves remained uncertain; 1 other wolf accompanied her during 1 survey effort. A report from USFS personnel suggested a minimum of 4 wolves in this area.

Giant Cedar (B256)

Utilizing information from local residents, biologists captured and radio collared female wolf B256 north of Elk River, Idaho, in late August. At the time of her capture, sign of 3 wolves was located in this area. Subsequent investigations were able to document B256 accompanied by just 1 other wolf. Reports from bow hunters suggested more wolves might have been present.

Grandad

In response to a report of 6 wolf pups seen by an outfitter in late May, biologists investigated the area. No evidence of pups was found but while surveying roads in the vicinity, 3 gray adults

were seen. Traps were set in the immediate area of an elk carcass wolves were feeding on, but coyotes scavenging on the remains confounded the capture operation. Hunters reported wolf sign south of Aquarius Campground, in the vicinity of Eagle Peak and Tumble and Sneak Creek drainages. It was not known if wolf sign in these areas might be associated with the documented Pot Mountain pack, the suspected Grandad pack, or other unknown wolves. Howling surveys conducted in the Eagle Peak area did not detect the presence of wolves, but a fresh wolf scat was found.

Suspected Border Packs

Brooks Creek (MT)

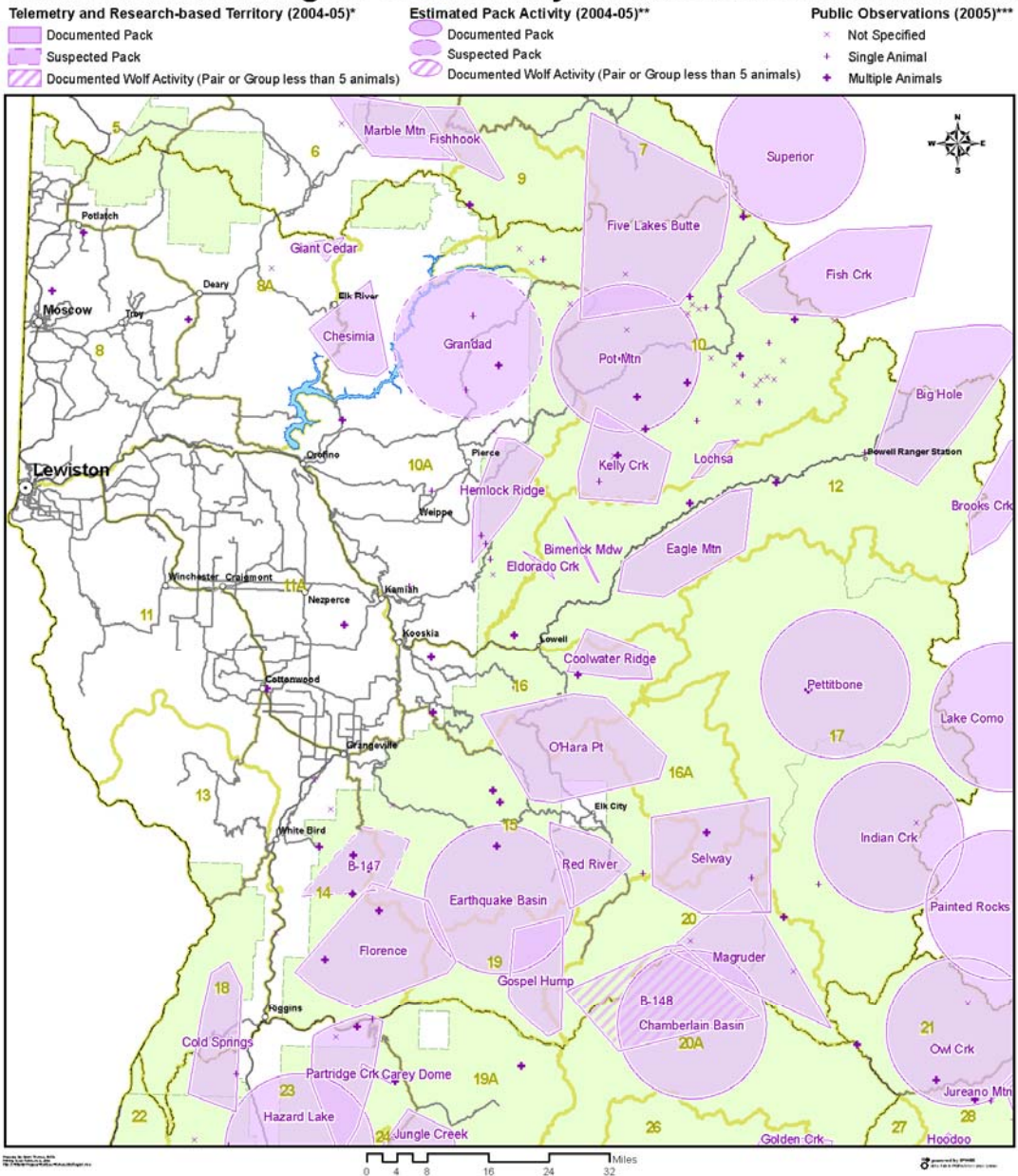
A radio collar was placed on a wolf in the Brooks Creek drainage in the spring of 2005 by a MTFWP biologist. Field investigations by MTFWP personnel indicated 3 wolves were present. They localized during denning season, but no evidence of reproduction was obtained. The Brooks Creek pack was counted as a documented pack for Montana, but was not counted as a breeding pair for 2005.

Other Wolf Groups Monitored

B148/B181

B148, a Big Hole pack member, went missing in 2003. B181, a Partridge Creek pack member, went missing in fall 2004. Radio collar frequencies for these 2 wolves were close together. In 2005, an off-frequency radio collar signal was picked up along the Salmon River above Riggins, Idaho. The frequency of this radio signal fluctuated and overlapped the assigned frequencies for these 2 wolves. As such, biologists were not able to determine if this signal was being emitted from B148's or B181's radio collar. In 2005, B148/181 established a territory along the main Salmon River. Aerial observations indicated there was a minimum of 3 wolves in this wolf group.

2005 Clearwater Region Wolf Activity Telemetry, Documented and Suspected Locations



* Telemetry data and research locations collected and analyzed by Idaho Department of Fish and Game, the Nez Perce Tribe, Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks and the National Park Service. Pack territories are minimum convex polygons of telemetry locations and research observations for radio-collared wolves from 1/1/2004 - 12/31/2005 with outliers removed. Packs which no longer existed in 2005 are excluded. This map is provided for management purposes and should not be used for data analysis. Do not release these data to third parties without first contacting the Idaho Department of Fish and Game or the Nez Perce Tribe.

** Estimated Pack Activity determined by biologists from research locations, public observations and incidental observations from 1/1/2004 - 12/31/2005.

*** Public Observations from 1/1/2005 - 12/31/2005 collected on the Idaho Fish and Game website and reviewed by staff biologists.

Map Produced by Idaho Fish and Wildlife Information System, Idaho Fish and Game in cooperation with: The Nez Perce Tribe, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, USDA APHIS Wildlife Services, Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks, and the National Park Service

Figure 7. Wolf pack activity and observations in the Clearwater Region, 2005.

Table 3. Estimated pack size, reproductive status, mortality, dispersal, monitoring status, and livestock depredation for documented and suspected wolf packs within Idaho Department of Fish and Game Clearwater Region, 2005.

Wolf pack or group	Reproductive status				Documented & suspected mortalities					Monitoring status			Confirmed & probable wolf-caused livestock losses		
	Min. no. wolves observed ^a	Min. no. pups prod.	Reprod. packs	Breeding pairs ^o	Natural	Control ^c	Other		Known dispersal	Active radio collars	Number wolves captured ^f	Number wolves missing ^g	Cattle	Sheep	Dogs
							human ^d	Unknown ^e							
Documented															
Big Hole (MT) ^h															
Bimerick Meadow	4	2	yes	yes	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0
Chesimia	5	3	yes	no	0	4	0	0	0	1	5	0	6	0	6
Cold Springs	3	?	?	no	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Coolwater Ridge	11	4	yes	yes	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Eagle Mountain	6	4	yes	yes	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Earthquake Basin	8	6	yes	yes	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Eldorado	5	2	yes	yes	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0
Fish Creek (MT) ^h															
Florence	15	6	yes	yes	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	2	0	0
Gospel Hump	?	?	?	no	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Hemlock Ridge	6	2	yes	yes	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0
Indian Creek	?	?	?	no	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Kelly Creek	11	2	yes	yes	0	0	0	0	0	3	2	0	0	0	0
Lake Como (MT) ^h															
Lochsa	6	3	yes	yes	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0
Magruder	?	?	?	no	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
O'Hara Point	8	6	yes	yes	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0
Pettibone	?	?	?	no	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Pot Mountain	?	?	?	no	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Red River	6	2	yes	yes	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0
Selway	6	?	?	no	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sula (MT) ^h															
Subtotal	100	42			0	4	1	0	1	13	11	4	8	0	6
Suspected															
B147	2	?	?	no	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Brooks Creek (MT) ^h															
Giant Cedar	2	?	?	no	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0
Grandad	3	?	?	no	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Subtotal	7				0	0	1	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	0
Other groups															
B148/B181 ⁱ	3	?	?	no	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Unknown					0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Subtotal	3				0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
Regional total	110	42			0	4	3	0	1	16	12	4	8	0	6

^a Number of wolves observed by wolf program personnel in 2005. Sum of this column does not equate to number of wolves estimated to be present in the population.

- ^b Breeding pairs are the measure of Federal and State wolf recovery and management goals. A breeding pair is defined as “an adult male and an adult female wolf that have produced at least 2 pups that survive until December 31 of the year of their birth...”.
- ^c Includes agency lethal control and legal take by landowners.
- ^d Includes all other human-related deaths.
- ^e Does not include pups that disappeared before winter.
- ^f Includes all wolves captured during 2005. Most, but not all, were radio-collared.
- ^g Radio-collared wolves that became missing in 2005.
- ^h Border pack officially tallied to (state); territory known or likely shared with Idaho. Data on these packs can be found in Rocky Mountain Wolf Recovery 2005 Interagency Annual Report.
- ⁱ It was not know if wolf B148 or B181 was part of this group as their radio frequencies are adjacent and cannot be discerned. Only one of these radio-collared individuals was present, not both, in this group.